

Message Text

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72

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 IO-14 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 RSC-01 SCI-06 SCEM-02 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 INT-08

DRC-01 /164 W

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R 091855Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6953

USAEC WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS LONDON 00385

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TECH, UK

SUBJECT: PROSPECTIVE HMG DECISION ON NUCLEAR REACTOR

CHOICE: CEGB PRONOUNCEMENTS ON PWR DESIGN AND SAFETY

REF: LONDON 15204

BEGIN SUMMARY: CEGB HAS MADE PUBLIC STATEMENT THAT IT INTENDS TO SUBMIT IN NEAR FUTURE EVIDENCE ON LWR SAFETY WHICH WILL PERMIT DTI'S NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS INSPECTORATE TO GIVE APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO PWR DESIGN BY LATE SUMMER. DETAILED PWR DESIGN WOULD NOT BE READY BEFORE END OF 1974 AND CEGB'S OWN FULL SAFETY ASSESSMENT ON FIRST PWR WOULD NOT BE COMPLETED BEFORE EARLY 1975. IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE HOW SUCCESSFUL THIS LATEST CEGB EFFORT WILL BE IN EXPEDITING HMG DECISION ON REACTOR CHOICE IN VIEW OF JANUARY 8 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LORD CARRINGTON WILL HEAD NEW DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, TAKING

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OVER ENERGY SECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES FROM SECSTATE FOR

DTI PETER WALKER. END SUMMARY.

1. ROY MATTHEWS, HEAD OF CEGB'S NUCLEAR HEALTH AND SAFETY BRANCH, HAS ANNOUNCED TO PRESS THAT CEGB WILL SUBMIT TWO REPORTS ON PWR DESIGN AND STEEL PRESSURE VESSEL INTEGRITY WITHIN NEAR FUTURE. MATTHEWS, CEGB'S EQUIVALENT TO DTI'S NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS INSPECTORATE (NII) CHIEF E.C. WILLIAMS, IS CONFIDENT THESE REPORTS WILL CONVINCE NII THAT A PWR CAN BE BUILT AND OPERATED WITHOUT MAJOR MODIFICATIONS TO COMPLY WITH UK SAFETY REQUIREMENTS. ACCORDING TO MATTHEWS, REPORT ON PRESSURE VESSEL INTEGRITY IS BASED ON WORK DONE BY CEGB AND UKAEA AS WELL AS USAEC.

2. MATTHEWS NOTED EXPERIMENTAL EVIDENCE NOW BECOMING AVAILABLE IN US ON CRITICAL SIZE OF CRACKS IS REMARKABLY CLOSE TO WESTINGHOUSE COMPUTER PROJECTIONS. EVIDENCE CONFIRMS THAT CRITICAL SIZE CRACK AROUND NOZZLE IS TWO INCHES WHILE INSPECTION METHODS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN BRITAIN CAN LOCATE CRACKS OF ONLY QUARTER INCH ANYWHERE IN 1200 MW VESSEL, AND THESE TECHNIQUES CAN BE IMPROVED STILL FURTHER. CEGB IS PROPOSING A "FINGERPRINTING" OF EVERY VESSEL FOR ALL DEFECTS BEFORE IT ENTERS SERVICE, A FURTHER INSPECTION AFTER ONE YEAR OF OPERATION AND SUBSEQUENT INSPECTIONS EVERY TWO OR THREE YEARS. THIS REGIME IS SAID TO BE CONSIDERABLY MORE STRINGENT THAN ACCEPTED US PRACTICE TODAY.

3. CEGB BELIEVES EVIDENCE TO BE SUBMITTED WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO WIN APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE OF PWR DESIGN BY LATE SUMMER. HOWEVER, CEGB WILL NOT BE ABLE TO SUBMIT A DETAILED DESIGN FOR ITS FIRST PWR UNTIL END OF 1974. MOREOVER, CEGB'S OWN FULL SAFETY ASSESSMENT FOR PLANT WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL EARLY 1975.

4. COMMENT: IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE HOW SUCCESSFUL THIS LATEST CEGB EFFORT WILL BE IN EXPEDITING AN HMG DECISION ON REACTOR CHOICE IN VIEW OF JANUARY 8 ANNOUNCEMENT THAT LORD CARRINGTON WILL HEAD NEW DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY TAKING OVER ENERGY SECTOR
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RESPONSIBILITIES FROM SECSTATE FOR DTI PETER WALKER.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PHYSICAL SECURITY, NUCLEAR REACTORS, NUCLEAR SAFETY
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JAN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974LONDON00385
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: LONDON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740154/aaaabypu.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: LONDON 15204
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 FEB 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 FEB 2002 by chappeld>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PROSPECTIVE HMG DECISION ON NUCLEAR REACTOR CHOICE: CEGB PRONOUNCEMENTS ON PWR DESIGN AND SAFETY
TAGS: TECH, UK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005